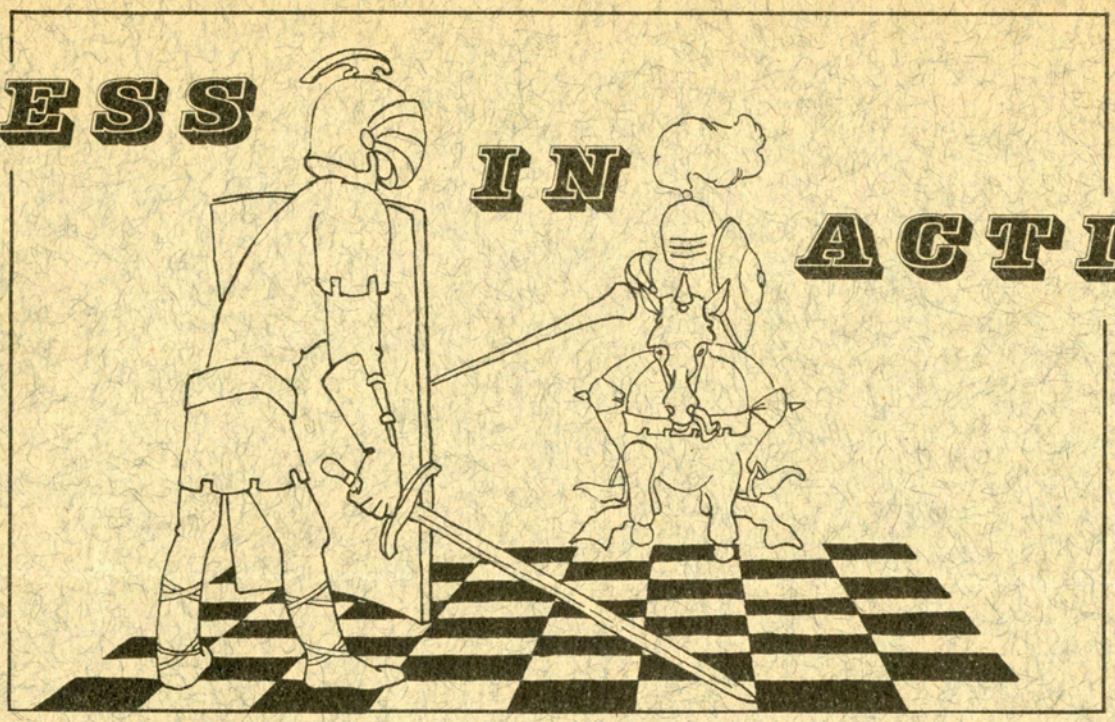
CHESS IN ACTION



JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1961

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EDITORIAL

You might not believe it, but quite the hardest part of writing a magazine is the Editorial. The reason for this is that an Editorial is generally supposed to be something short but pithy; it has to be inspirational; it has to have a message.

Yet, when I try to think of a good message, all I can think of are things like I must remember to ask Art Wang if he is going to call his first-born "Zug'z or I wonder if there is anything in the basic training of pickpockets warning them to stay away from chess tournaments (pocket chess sets are so like wallets, you know).

Occasionally I think of something really good, but by the time I have developed it I often have a four-edition length article.

About the only inspirational thing I can think of at present is that we are now in a simply wonderful year - 1961. It reads exactly the same whether you stand on your feet or your head! And it will not be until the year 6009 before you will be able to do that again!

STAUNTON DINNERPLATE

THE RAILROAD ROUND ROBIN

It was bitterly cold in Paris, the morning that Igor Blastovsky, Boris Gufinov, Carolyn Prszynsk, and I, boarded the Riviera Express, bound for sunny Nice, where we were to be the house guests of that wealthy patron of the Scaccic Arts, the Marquis de Madde. We had all taken part in a chess tournament, the previous week, and had agreed to play a Round Robin on the fourteen hour train journey south.

Carolyn Prszynsk, the winner of the previous week's tournament, was an extremely beautiful girl with (at least) a 38" bust measurement. Indeed, kibitzers had often wondered how she managed to see the board! She had recently returned from French Equatorial Africa, where she had been sent to find out why the natives were restless. Unfortunately, her presence made the natives even more restless and she had had to be recalled.

I suppose I was lucky in drawing to play Carolyn in the first round, for the train had not got properly warmed up and, in spite of being buttoned up to the chin in fur, her teeth chattered and she played poorly. I soon got a pawn up and had little difficulty in pushing home the advantage. Meanwhile, on the other board, the handsome Boris Gufinov drew with the seventy year old Igor Blastovsky.

What I like about French trains are the wonderful meals they serve, and the tremendous variety of hors d'oeuvres (a meal in themselves). And, of course, you have to have wine! In fact, we all had rather more than we should have for good chess.

After lunch, Carolyn played Boris and here I had a real demonstration of psychological and chemical warfare. I also realized how she had managed to win the tournament of the previous week. It was now warm in the train, and Carolyn had shed her furs. Firstly, the panorama confronting Boris was too much for him - he was unnerved from the first move. Then the chemical warfare. I cannot quite say whether the perfume was "My Pin" or "Gambit No. 5", or maybe a blend of the two. But it not only had its deadly effect on Boris but on me too, sitting at the next board, playing Igor. In fact I would have lost had not Igor fallen asleep with his clock running.*

Dinner was a repetition of lunch, and all four of us were very sleepy during the next round. I played Boris and Carolyn played Igor. We had been playing for about an hour when the train reached Marseilles and started shunting operations. The trouble was that each jerk kept sliding the chessmen about and I noticed that certain men that had lost their felt bases slid two squares to every one square of the other men. I do not know whether or not this was the reason for my win but I suddenly noticed I had Boris checkmated. Meanwhile, Carolyn had apparently taken advantage of the same situation to snatch Igor's Queen - Igor apparently being too old to suffer from her other wiles.

So, I ended up the winner with a perfect score of three, followed by Carolyn who, most appropriately, had two points!

***

George Koltanowski Sets New Record

On December 4, George Koltanowski broke his own world record for successfully playing the largest number of opponents blindfold - that is, George had no sight of the board. The play took place at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco and was attended by a tremendous audience of over 500. The stage was divided into three sections: On the left, George sat at a small card table, facing the audience. Isolating him from the rest of the stage was a Chinese Screen. On the other side of the screen, roughly in the middle of the stage, was another table with a chess set. It was at this table that the opponents made their moves while another official made the moves for George. At the table was a timekeeper to see that no one exceeded the 10 seconds a move time limit. On the extreme right of the stage, was a gigantic board and men of the display type so that everyone in the audience could follow the play of each game.

George chopped his opponents down at the record rate of one every 7 minutes and ended up winning 50 games and drawing 6. Then he delighted everyone by doing the Knight's Tour.

The performance was sponsored by the San Francisco Chronicle and the paper broke records with its splendid coverage of the event which was as complete as if it had been a major football or baseball event.

Winner of the Christmas Competition

Readers may remember that we showed a picture of some Russians putting Mikhail Tahl into a space rocket. We asked for a caption to the sketch. Winner of the competition was Ed Bogas of Menlo Park, with the caption: "WITH MIKHAIL ON THE MOVE, WE'RE BOUND TO GET AN ADVANTAGE IN SPACE". A prize is on its way. Other clever captions were "Let's see you gambit yourself out of this situation, Comrade Tal." (Leonard Trottier of Richmond); "What! No Mate in One?" -(J. Friedman of Hayward); and "Is reward for beating Russian World Champion"(Nigel Dodge of Willitts).

A Guide to the Gambits of Chessversation

The following was sent to us by Richard Shorman who found it in the December edition of the British magazine "CHESS". It is by H.E.G. Courtney and runs thus:

This little glossary of some of the more common chessversational plays is especially designed for the newcomer to tournament or match play: it will help the beginner to understand better exactly what is being said to him; will show him the underlying and treacherous meaning of apparently harmless remarks to which he might otherwise fall a victim.

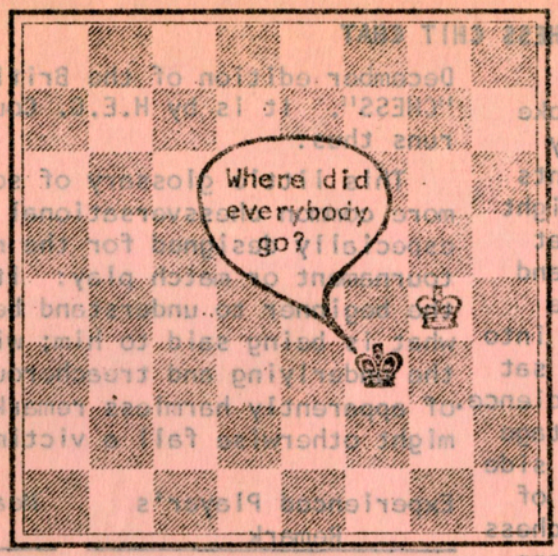
Experienced Player's Remark	Meaning behind It
Deprecatingly: I'm a little out of practice, I'm afraid.	I haven't played a serious game since Tuesday.
Casually: Do you mind if I have the clock on the left?	The right-hand clock gains 10 mins. per hour.
Heartily: Oh well, let's get away from the book.	I have forgotten the book line.
Petulantly, as White, after 1. P-K4, P-QB4: Oh dear, and I wanted to play the Kings Gambit.	I have just looked up the latest Russian line against the Sicilian.
Light-heartedly: Let's have a bit of fun.	If you take my Knight it's mate in three.
Slowly to himself: That's interesting.	Your move is a blunder.
How is your game going?	Come on, ask me about mine.
Not a very good game; too many mistakes	I lost.
I had a very interesting game: quite a pretty finish.	I won.

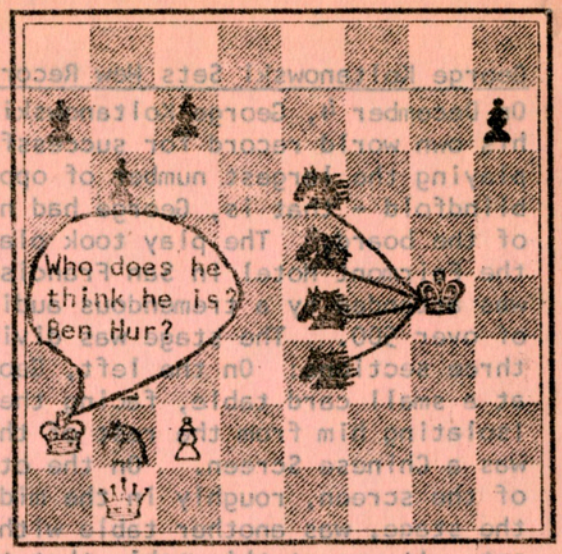
News about Members

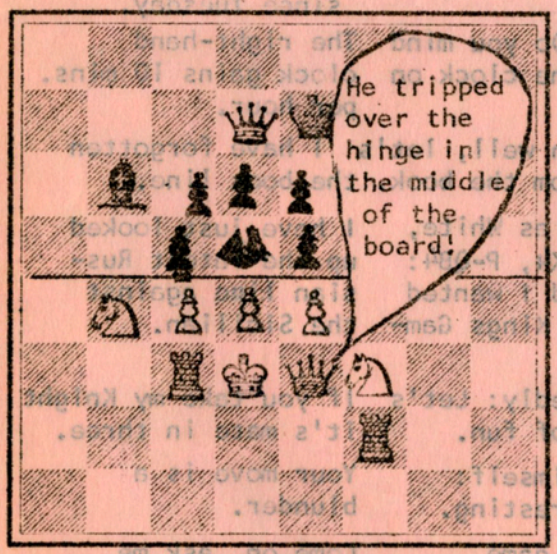
Mr. Robert Burger, who used to be Editor of "Chess in Action" but went East, is now back in San Francisco and has opened his advertising agency at 210 California St., San Francisco (YUkon 2-5863). If he can find time, he is going to do some annotations for C-in-A.

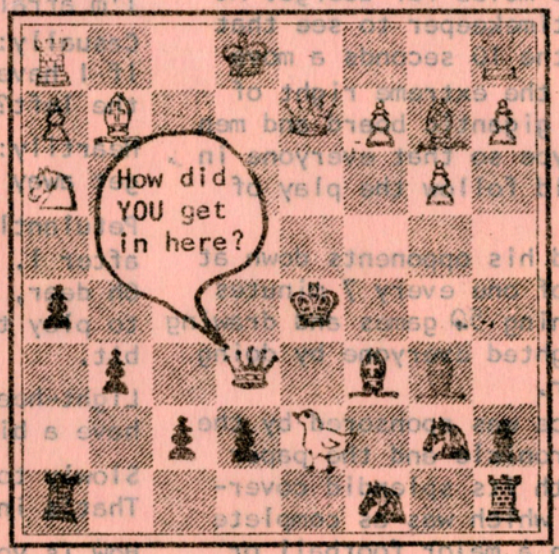
Your Editor is planning shortly to take up full time consulting work in data processing and Operations Research techniques. The article on Chess and Game Theory was conceived from his recent studies of these new and fascinating mathematical techniques. Mr. Almond would be happy to address any lunch or dinner groups on these subjects.

DAFFY DIAGRAMS









"AN ALMOND INSPIR-ATION"

Todos os direitos estritamente reservados

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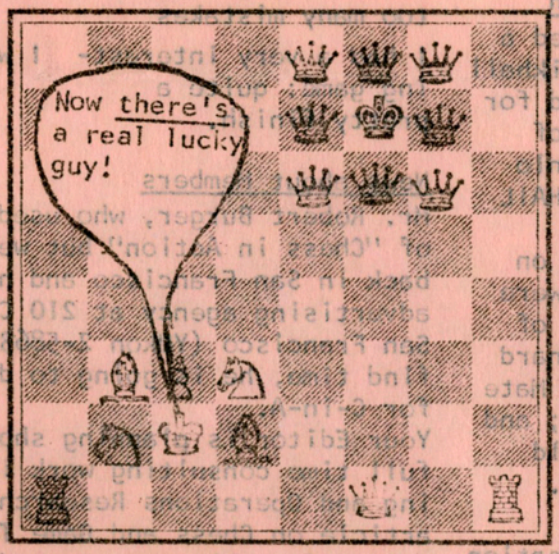
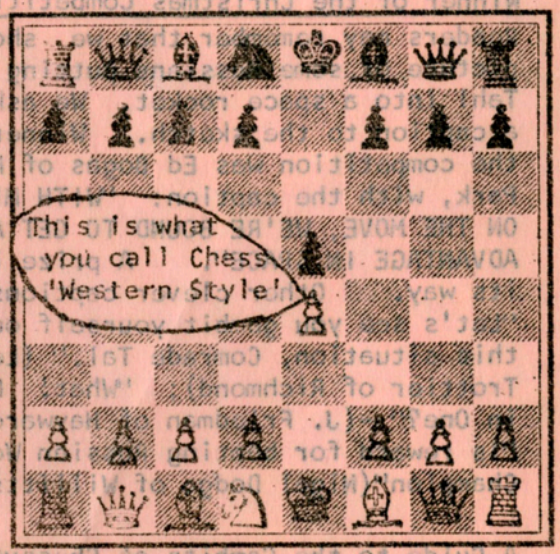
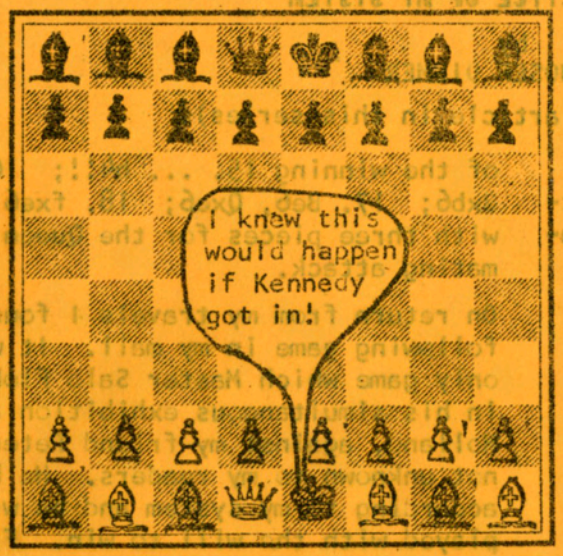
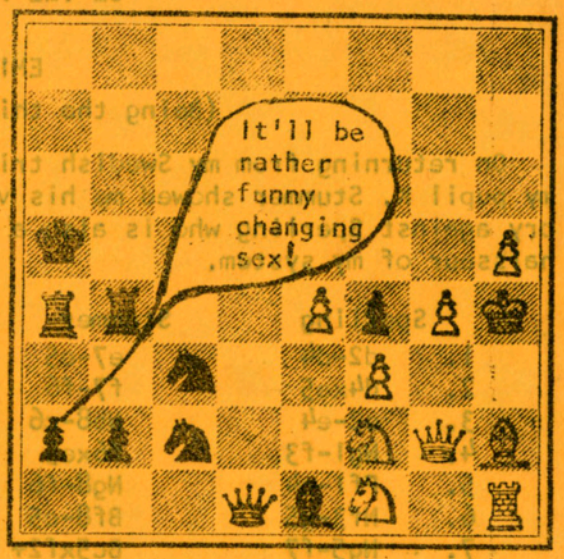
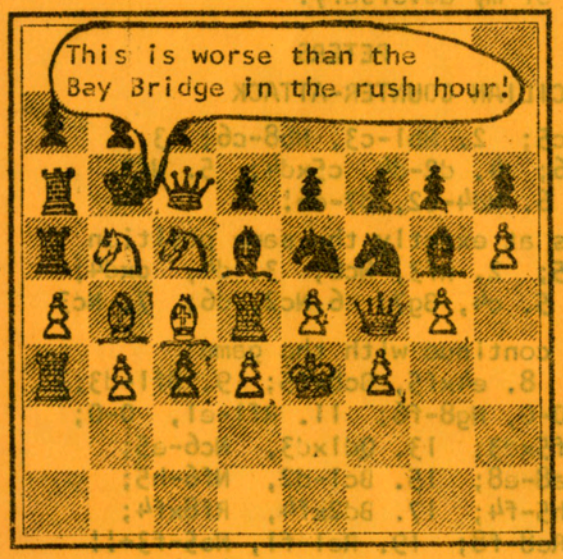
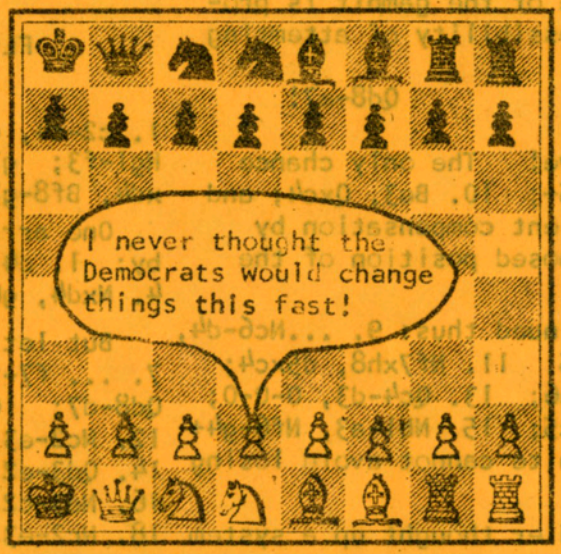


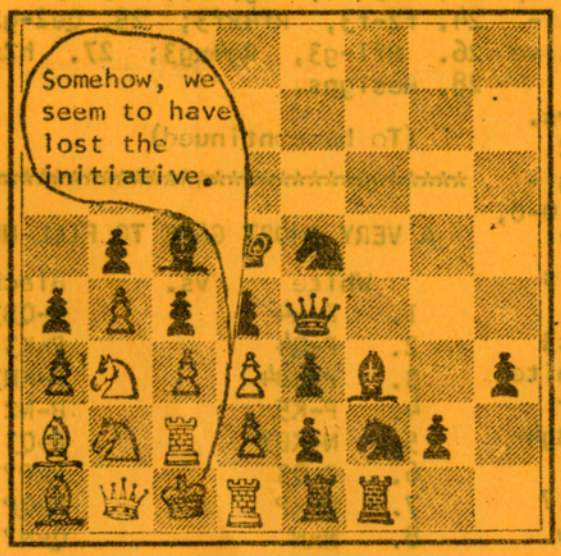


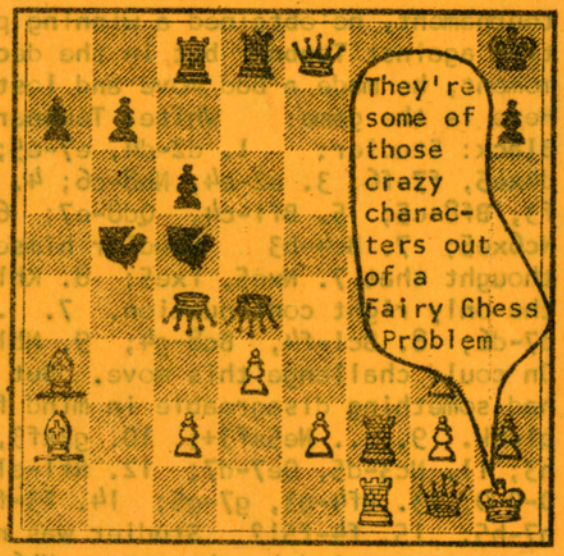

I knew this would happen if Kennedy got in!


It'll be rather funny changing sex!


This is worse than the Bay Bridge in the rush hour!


I never thought the Democrats would change things this fast!


Somehow, we seem to have lost the initiative.


They're some of those crazy characters out of a Fairy Chess Problem

ON THE PRACTICE OF MY SYSTEM

by
EMIL JOSEF DIEMER

(Being the third article in this series).

On returning from my Swedish trip, my pupil K. Stummer showed me his victory against Sperling who is also a connaisseur of my system.

	Sperling	Stummer
1.	d2-d4	e7-e5
2.	d4xe5	f7-f6
3.	e2-e4	Nb8-c6
4.	Ng1-f3	f6xe5
5.	Ff1-c4	Ng8-f6
6.	Nf3-g5	Bf8-c5
7.	Ng5-f7	Bc5xf2+
8.	Kelxf2	

The acceptance of the gambit is probably the only possibility of attemting a refutation.

8. ... Qd8-e7!
9. Qd1-e2

The losing move! The only chance is: 9. Nxh8, Qc5+; 10. Be3, Qxc4; and Black has sufficient compensation by reason of the exposed position of the white King.

The game continued thus: 9. ...Nc6-d4, 10. Qe2-d3, d7-d5; 11. Nf7xh8, d5xc4; 12. Qd3xc4, Bc8-e6; 13. Qc4-d3, 0-0-0; 14. Rh1-d1, Qe7-c5; 15. Nb1-a3, Nf6-g4+ 16. Resigns. (White cannot avoid losing his Queen).

My friend Studier thought up a system to avoid the Traxler variation. In the Final of the Rastatt Circle's annual Cup tournament, he obtained a winning position against Teubner but in the decisive moment, he made a bad move and lost. Here is the game: White: Teubner vs. Black: Studier: 1. d2-d4, e7-e5; 2. d4xe5, f7-f6; 3. e2-e4, Nb8-c6; 4. Ng1-f3, Bf8-c5; 5. Bf1-c4, Qd8-e7; 6. 0-0, Nc6xe5; 7. Bc4-b3 Studier himself thought that 7. Nxe5, fxe5; 8. Kh1 is the only right continuation. 7. ... d7-d6; 8. Bc1-f4, Bc8-g4; 9. Nb1-c3 On could challenge this move. But white had something disagreable in mind for black. 9. ... Ne5xf3+; 10. g2xf3, Bg4-h3; 11. Nc3-d5, Qe7-d7; 12. Rf1-e1, 0-0-0; 13. Bf4-g3, g7-g5; 14. f3-f4!? h7-h5; 15. f4-f5!? Studier was now very preoccupied by the menace Nb6+ followed by Be6 with the gain of the Q, and so he played 15. ... Re8? instead of the winning 15. ... h4!!; 16. Nb6+, Bxb6; 17. Be6, Qxe6; 18. fxe6, hxg3; with three pieces for the Queen and a mating attack.

On return from my travels I found the following game in my mail. It was the only game which Master Salo Flohr lost in his simultaneous exhibition at Zaandam, Holland, against my friend Peters who is not unknown to my readers. He had played according to my system and he wrote: "I played with the will to win. From the 18th move, your guiding spirit forced me not to let go of my adversary."

FLOHR PETERS

SICILIAN COUNTER-ATTACK

1. c2-c4, c7-c5; 2. Nb1-c3, Nb8-c6; 3. Ng1-f3; g7-g6; 4. d2-d4, c5xd4; 5. Nf3 xd4, Bf8-g7; 6. Nd4-c2, d7-d6!

One arrives at exactly the same position by: 1. e4, c5; 2. Nf3, Nc6; 3. d4, cxd4; 4. Nxd4, g6!; 5. c4, Bg7; 6.Nc2, d6; 7. Nc3

But let us continue with the game: 7. ... f7-f5; 8. e4xf5, Bc8xf5; 9. Bf1-d3, Qd8-d7; 10. 0-0, Ng8-f6; 11. Rf1-e1, 0-0; 12. Nc2-e3, Bf5xd3; 13. Qd1xd3, Nc6-e5; 14. Qd3-e2, Ra8-e8; 15. Bc1-d2, Nf6-h5; 16. Ne3-c2, Nh5-f4; 17. Bd2xf4, Rf8xf4; 18. Nc2-e3, Re8-f8; 19. Re1-f1, Ne5-f3+!! 20. g2xf3, Qd7-h3; 21. Rf1-e1, Rf4-h4; 22. Ne3-f1, Bg7-e5; 23 f3-f4, Rf8xf4; 24. f2-f3, Rf4xf3; 25. Qe2-g2, Rh4-g4; 26. Nf1-g3, Rg4xg3; 27. h2xg3, Be5-d4+; 28. Resigns.

(To be continued)

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STRAUNTON TRIVIALITY

SOME RAVINGS FROM THE RIVIERA

When the fabulously wealthy chess fanatic, the Marquis de Madde, puts on a party, he certainly does a wonderful job. Everybody came in chess costume and there were Kings, Queens, Bishops, Fous, Knights, Rooks and Pawns of all different chess styles in history. The decorations put up specially for the occasion, throughout the mansion and the vast grounds, were also of scaccic significance.

There were two bands to play for guests. There was Ruy Lopez and his Scaccic Strings, and Bogolybov and his Bongo Band. All the music had chess significance. When I first entered, a singer was singing "Give my regards to Bronstein, Say Hullo to Taimanov Square". Then another singer followed with "When you're Smyslov, When you're Smyslov, the Whole World Smyslovs too".

During the evening, the bands played "That Old Blackmar Magic", the beautiful "Ponziani", "Nimzo-Indian Love Call", "A Guy Named Giuco Piano", "Somebody Keres for Me", "I'm Reti for Love", "Rook of Ages", "One Knight of Love", "I can't Stay Away Max Lange", "Lipstick on Your Colle", "I'm just Wild about Milner-Barry", "Yes, Sir, that's my Bishop", "Your Rook Came Out of Nowhere", "Oh you Beautiful Queen", and many others.

There was all the food and drink in the world, including foamy Falkbeer, and some delicious Pietsch Pie.

As most of the chess fraternity present were of the masculine sex, the Marquis had brought in two groups of chorus girls from local shows. They were fetchingly dressed in somewhat abbreviated Pawn costumes.

It was the first time in my life I saw:

Two Rooks doing the Cha Cha!

A Knight with a Martini in each hand!

A Pawn slap a King in the face!

Two Kings assisting a white-faced Bishop to the restroom!

The high spot of the evening was when a group of comely Pawns decided to cool off in the goldfish pond. Appropriately enough, the band struck up the song "Three Pawns in the Fountain".

I never had such a ball. In fact, "I could have Dunst All Night".

****

LOOKING AHEAD!!! The United States Chess Federation will hold its 62nd annual U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT at the SHERATON-PALACE HOTEL, August 14th to 27th, 1961...This is a FIRST for the BAY AREA, a chance for you to play or be a spectator, watching many of the best CHESS PLAYERS in the WORLD! CHESS FRIENDS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA is proud to be working with all chess groups in CALIFORNIA to make this the best tournament ever held. Our GEORGE KOLTANOWSKI will be TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR!!!

CHESS AND THE THEORY OF GAMES OF STRATEGY

by
JOHN E. ALMOND

The earliest publication dealing with the theory of games and the application of that theory is by Professor John von Neumann ("Zur Theorie der Gesellshaftsspiele" 1928). This theory was brought to a very high state of development by von Neumann and O. Morgenstern ("Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour", Princetown University Press, 1947). In brief, this is serious mathematics. Yet, I imagine that only one chessplayer in a thousand even knew such a theory existed!

"Game Theory", to give it its shorter name, embraces all situations where a conflict exists and in which we have some element of control over the situation. It may cover problems of war (or even love!) problems of business, or problems arising in social and human relationships; even Musical Chairs or Poker or Chess! In fact, looking through a bibilography at the end of one of my books, we see such titles as: "A Simple Three-Person Poker Game" - Contributions to the Theory of Games; "Strategy in Poker, Business, and War"; "Some Two-Person Games Involving Bluffing". However, do not rush down to the book store and buy some books on Game Theory because, unless you are a mathematician, or have studied Calculus and beyond (mainly beyond) the odds are that you won't understand a single paragraph. If you are mathematically inclined, you would do well to first buy "Introduction to Finite Mathematics" by Kemeny, Snell, and Thompson, Prentice-Hall, which leads you gentle through Set Theory and Probability Theory, and Vectors and Matrices, into Linear Programming and the Theory of Games.

At this point, you are probably asking "In what way will this Game Theory help me to play better chess?" and my answer to this is that, while Chess is too complicated to be analyzed completely, simplifications of strategies and tactics leading up to the actual game itself are amenable to computation and can immeasurably improve the percentage of games that you win. Furthermore, even the professors are still groping in the dark to some extent, as to the potentialities of the theory and it is the author's believe that, when the theory has been stripped of some of the mathematical gibberish and applied by practical businessmen, new uses will be found for the theories by both businessmen and players of games. Of one thing though, I am absolutely convinced and that is that any Captain of a Chess Team should be something of an expert in Game Theory.

Naturally enough, as I am not writing this game for mathematicians (and couldn't anyhow) I shall have to keep everything very simple and very elementary. So the examples I will use will be very easy to understand. Much more difficult problems can be solved by Game Theory but these will be beyond the scope of this article. Firstly, let me explain what we mean by the word "game". To avoid ambiguity, we will say "Chess is more difficult than checkers" but we will say "I played five <u>plays</u> of Chess over the week-end". We shall also be using the word "strategy" quite a bit. A strategy is a plan so complete that it cannot be upset by enemy action or by Nature. In other words, it is the best possible plan, no matter whether we are playing against one or more opponents or against Nature. Strategies are either <u>pure strategies</u> or <u>grand strategies</u>. A <u>pure</u> strategy is one of possibly many that might be adopted in a certain conflict situation, while a <u>grand</u> strategy is the overall strategy that might say that you should play <u>pure</u> strategy #1 twice to playing <u>pure</u> strategy #2 once.

Games are divided into different categories. We begin with the simplest form of game: a Two-by-two game (2x2 game). Next follows a Two x m game (2xm) where you can look upon the "m" as meaning "more" and is similar to our old algebraic "x". Then we have 3x3 games, 3xm games, and others. In order to allow ourselves to analyze games, we state them in a certain form, called a Game Matrix. The players we call Rowe and Colle (to help us remember that Rowe is using the rows, and Colle is using the columns). We will vary the names of these players from time to time

with Rowsky and Kolsky; Sarowski and Sokolski; Darrow and Dacol; Roemer and Colmar; Saroni and Socoli and such like names and we may even stoop to unimaginative R and C.

Here are some Game Matrices:

Colle

Rowe		
	3	6
	9	0

Colle

Rowe	1	2	3	4
1	1	7	-3	-2
2	-1	-2	-1	4
3	-5	2	2	1

The points in the squares are always the payoffs to Rowe. That is, when the payoff is actually to Colle, we see a minus figure in the square. Look at the first matrix above, Rowe has two pure strategies to use, either the first row, or the second. Similarly, Colle has two strategies he can use. In the second matrix, Rowe has three strategies and Colle has four. Game Theory tells us which strategies Rowe and Colle should use to come out the best. The answer may say that Rowe should <u>always</u> play Strategy #1 and Colle should <u>always</u> play Strategy 2. On the other hand, the answers might be that Rowe should mix his strategies in the ratio of 2:3 and Colle mix his strategies in the ratio of 3:5. These latter are termed "Mixed Strategies".

Let us look at an actual problem:

Two chessplayers, who play together regularly, developed the following grand strategies:

"Anton the Attacker" always attacked, whether he had the White pieces or the Black. His problem was to decide which side of the board to attack.

"Delmar the Defender", on the other hand, always defended. His strategy was to try to persuade Anton to compromise the direction of his attack and lure his (say) Kingside, and then he would castle Queenside. If he managed to do this, he usually won, but if he was bluffed into castling on the side Anton was figuring on attacking, he usually lost.

We have to assume that the eccentric patterns of the woodpushers' play gave no reliable indications to their intentions.

Credit Delmar with 6 points if he manages to castle on the opposite side to the one Anton has decided to attack; zero otherwise. Also credit him with 3 extra points if he manages to castle Kingside.

The problem is:
(a) Set up the game matrix; (b) Find the optimal strategies for the two players; (c) What is the value of the game and what does this imply? (d) How can the flipping of coins assist their decisions?

Answer (a)

		Delmar defends Castles K-side	Castles Q-side	Anton's odds
Anton attacks	King side	3	6	9
	Queen side	9	0	3
Delmar's odds:		6	6	

Answer (b)

Delmar should plan to castle Kingside and Queenside in equal proportions, that is, in the ratio of 1:1. Anton, on the other hand, should plan to attack Kingside three times out of four, or in the ratio of 3:1.

***

CHESS-PLAYER v. COMPUTER
(conclusion)

Two editions ago, when we began this series of articles, we believed that it might give us some clues as to the basic questions a chess-player should ask himself before making a move. In the last edition, we told how the Computer asked 8 basic questions each move in order to pick out seven "best" moves to make. Then it analysed these seven moves some distance ahead. We also know that the Computer never made stupid blunders though it did not play like a Master. So, as a beginning point, it might not be a bad start to chess improvement, if we reworded these 8 basic questions slightly and used them ourselves. Here they are, slightly revised:

1. Am I in check? If so, do I capture, interpose, or move my King. Can my opponent check me next move, if I don't do something now? If I don't do something now, would I capture, interpose, or move my King? NOTE: This question would, it is submitted, remove one of the biggest sources of blunders - allowing your opponent to start an attack by checking your King.
2. Are any exchanges possible and, if so, looking some moves ahead, can I gain time or material by entering into such an exchange or should I move my man away or support it so that an exchange would improve my own position? NOTE: Many attacks start by a series of exchanges.
3. If I have not castled, can I do so now and should I do so now? On which side, would it be most advantageous to castle?
4. Can I develop a piece?
5. Can I occupy an open file?
6. Can I move a man to a critical square created by pawn chains?
7. Can I make an advantageous pawn move?
8. Can I make an advantageous piece move?

On discussing this problem of human thought processes while playing chess, with a high "A" class player, he said that his basic thought was "Why did my opponent make the move he did?" This was his first analysis and he would come up with a number of different conclusions, depending on his opponent. If he was playing an "A" player and this opponent made a move that did not conform to "the book" in the early stages of the game, he would suspect a trap of some sort or that maybe his opponent had found a new line of play. But, if his opponent was a "C" player, he would decide the move was a mistake. In this way, he told me, he had often been beaten by "C" players! Further questioning elicited a few other, fairly obvious hints, such as: "Can my King be checked next move?"; after a Knight move: "Can that Knight fork anything in the next few moves?" "After any move, does the piece moved free another piece and, if so, can that second piece make any dangerous attacking move?"

Of course, it is obvious that players must have quite different thought processes, depending upon the class of player they are. I imagine a Master, in general, would criticise the moves of his Master opponent by such thoughts as "Yes - that was the move made by Janowski when he was playing Steinitz at Nurnberg in 1896 - there are, let me see, at least three better continuations (and then he would mentally analyze these and decide which one had the best chance of success). Now obviously a "C" player could not think in the same manner.

At any rate, here we have much food for thought.

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